

NORTH AMERICAN

WETLANDS

CONSERVATION ACT

project flash

Wisconsin Partnerships Receive \$1,998,400 for Wetlands Projects

On September 8, 2004, the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission, as authorized under the North American Wetlands Conservation Act, approved **\$1,998,400** in funding for **two projects** in **Wisconsin**. The Act is nonregulatory and calls for voluntary partnerships to develop and implement wetlands and associated uplands projects to benefit wildlife. Projects must meet certain biological criteria to be considered for funding, and partners must be able to match the grant request 1:1 with nonfederal funds. In total, project partners are matching their grants with **\$4,575,428** and are adding **\$57,888** to one of their projects.

Southeast Wisconsin Coastal Habitat Initiative Phase IV Project

This project is located in all or part of **13 counties** in Wisconsin's **Congressional Districts 1, 4, 5, 6, and 8**. The International Joint Commission for the Great Lakes Water Quality Board designated Lake Michigan's Green Bay as one of four Areas of Concern because of pollutant and toxic sediment levels. Wetlands in the area are further threatened by development due to their location in the fastest developing part of the State. This project supports the goals and objectives of the Remedial Action Plan developed for the bay by a joint technical-citizenry committee.

Partners' work in the project's fourth phase complements that of previous phases. Using their **\$998,400 grant** and **\$2,043,500** in matching contributions, partners will acquire fee title to 690 acres of wetlands and associated uplands on 16 tracts of public and private lands in the watersheds of Green Bay and coastal Lake Michigan. They will restore another 537 acres of small and large wetlands to meet a variety of waterfowl needs. Some 814 acres more of uplands will be enhanced by planting native, warm-season grasses to improve nesting cover. In total, **2,041 acres** will be affected.

The annual population of breeding waterfowl in the project area, estimated to be 100,000 strong and comprised largely of mallards, blue-winged teal, northern pintails, and American black ducks, will benefit greatly from partners' efforts. Seven federally listed endangered or threatened species, such as piping plover and bald eagle, and 139 state-listed endangered, threatened, or special concern species also will benefit. The public will have additional lands available for recreational and educational uses and improved water quality in the area's watersheds.

Partners making all this possible include Ducks Unlimited, Inc., Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewage District, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources- Bureaus of Wildlife Management and Endangered Resources, Pheasants Forever, Inc., Ozaukee Washington Land Trust, and Oneida Nation. Their project advances the goals of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan's **Upper Mississippi River & Great Lakes Joint Venture**, U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan, Partners in Flight, and North American Waterbird Conservation Plan.

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Winnebago System-Rush Lake Initiative Project

This project is located in **Winnebago, Waushara, and Fond du Lac Counties** in Wisconsin's **Congressional District 6**. Project partners will be working adjacent to the Fox Valley area, one of the fastest growing areas of the State, where urban development pressure falls heavily on agricultural lands and wetlands and associated uplands. The project area is within the Winnebago System-Rush Lake complex, which comprises 19 percent of the Wisconsin's surface water acreage. The Winnebago System consists of large expanses of deep marsh and shallow, open water. The watershed of 3,000-acre Rush Lake is a major contributor to that system.

A coalition of citizens groups, local governments, and resource professionals devised two resource management plans for the complex: the Winnebago Comprehensive Management Plan and the Rush Lake Strategic Action Plan. In total, project partners will protect, restore, or enhance nearly **6,065 acres** of critical migratory bird habitat in accordance with these plans. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (Department) will acquire nine tracts of land, totaling 967 acres of habitat, through fee-title acquisition and 68 acres more through a private landowner's fee-title donation. Pheasants Forever, Inc., and Winnebago County Conservation Club each will protect another 80 and 27 acres, respectively, through fee-title acquisition. The Department will acquire perpetual conservation easements on three other tracts totaling 432 acres. Partners also will restore 3,350 acres of Rush Lake's wetlands and upland habitats. Enhancement actions will concentrate on reinforcing 1,141 acres of shoreline in the Winnebago System, where erosion is claiming 10 feet per year. Some 244 of the acres to be restored or enhanced occur on lands also being acquired through this project.

Thousands of **Mississippi Flyway** waterfowl and migratory shorebirds, songbirds, and waterbirds will benefit from partners' efforts, as will several federally and state-listed endangered and threatened species. The project area is within 75 miles of 2.5 million people and receives heavy recreational use by boaters, hunters, trappers, anglers, and birdwatchers. These folks will have access to additional public lands from this project and will benefit in many ways from the water quality improvements it brings.

Partners received a **\$1,000,000 grant**, which they are matching with **\$2,531,928**. Partners include Ducks Unlimited, Inc., Fox River Natural Resource Damage Assessment, Winnebago County Land and Water Conservation Department, Pheasants Forever, Inc.-Fox River Valley Chapter, Winnebago County Conservation Club, Bohn Farms, Lake Poygan Sportsman's Club, Jack Quigley, Tony Herbst, Gerald Berger, Tom Metz, Lake Butte des Morts Conservation Club, Rush Lake Watershed Restoration, Inc., Ron Nielsen, Tri-County Powerboat Association, Oshkosh Area Community Foundation, and the Department's Bureaus of Endangered Resources, Wildlife Management, and Fisheries and Habitat Protection. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency added another **\$57,888** in nonmatching funds.

This project supports the goals of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan's **Upper Mississippi River & Great Lakes Joint Venture**, U.S. Shorebird Conservation Plan, Partners in Flight, and North American Waterbird Conservation Plan.

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